



GIPPSLAND ASBESTOS RELATED DISEASES SUPPORT INC.  
GARDS is endorsed as a charity. Donations of \$2.00 & over are tax deductible.

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# ASBESTOS NEWS

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## REICHSTEIN FOUNDATION SUPPORTS GARDS ADVOCACY

GARDS committee and members were very pleased to find out a submission that they had made to the Reichstein Foundation had been successful in funding a part-time worker for their advocacy work.

GARDS will continue to be a voice for asbestos sufferers not only in Gippsland but further a field. The work that GARDS has already done will continue and grow with the assistance of the Reichstein Foundation. We are very proud and pleased to be able to continue some of the projects that GARDS is already undertaking and we have some other projects in mind that will only benefit all Australians. We at GARDS feel that this is a monumental step forward for the future of our organisation. GARDS committee and members would like to thank all those in our Gippsland community also Metro and Regional communities for their support and faith in what we have been trying to achieve and we will continue to try and keep that faith with our supporters.

## WORKSAFE SPONSORSHIP

Again GARDS committee and members had some wonderful news that WorkSafe Victoria would be maintaining funding to GARDS. We are very pleased and proud to have the support of WorkSafe. We wish to thank John Merritt, Executive Director for his support of GARDS and WorkSafe's on going support of asbestos sufferers in the community.

As you might be aware professionals in the field have predicted conservatively that 40,000 people in Australia will die of an asbestos related disease between 2001 – 2020 of that amount 10,000 will be Victorians. This equates to approx 10 Victorians a week dying, with those sort of figures GARDS job is growing bigger every week. We have more and more people relying on our services for support, free medical equipment and information. Sadly this will grow far beyond 2020 and the need to support the sufferers and their families will be there for a long time to come. It is very important that the public be educated to the dangers of asbestos and that they are made aware of procedures that they need to follow if they must handle small amounts of domestic asbestos in their homes. So this on going support from WorkSafe is very important to recognise the work that GARDS is undertaking in the community. We thank all those people from WorkSafe who support the work we are doing.

**DID YOU KNOW**  
**Meredith Hellicar**  
**chairwoman of scandal**  
**–plagued James Hardie**  
**Industries is out and**  
**about attending**  
**meetings of the various**  
**company boards on**  
**which she sits, and**  
**giving inspirational**  
**speeches on corporate**  
**social responsibility.**  
**Good One**  
**Meredith!**

**Sponsored by:**



**DIARY DATE: ASBESTOS AWARENESS DAY – 30<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER**  
**ROSE GARDEN, MORWELL – 11.00AM**

## GUARDIAN ANGEL FOR ASBESTOS SUFFERERS

Last week GARDS received a donation from a special family in Traralgon who made it possible for GARDS to purchase an oxygen concentrator for asbestos sufferers.

The family wish to remain anonymous but GARDS would like to tell the story of how this family came to help asbestos sufferers in Gippsland.

The son of this family tells us that in 1951 his father died and left his mother and four children alone. The mother went back to work to support her family she used her chemistry degree in the analysis of uranium compounds at an Atomic Energy Commission laboratory at Iowa State University. She successfully raised these children and retired at age 65, she passed away at the age of 78.

Fifteen years later the U.S Government came out with a compensation program for uranium workers who had worked in an unhealthy environment half a century ago. The government had identified a problem that the construction of devices from the light metal beryllium produced beryllium dust, which caused, after about 30 years, a lung disease, officially called chronic beryllium disease. The government identified anyone who had worked in this environment was susceptible.

In the 1990s long after his mother had died doctors could finally diagnose this disease. A few more years went by before the U.S Government realized there should be compensation and decided to whom and how much. By 2004 there was widespread information about the disease and compensation program. At that point the sister of this man, who was still living in Iowa, heard about it and decide to have a go at compensation. The sister collected the paperwork and mailed in employment records, medical records, birth and death certificates and signed the forms. To the surprise of the family the U.S Department of Labour quickly identified the disease and sent out a survivor benefit cheque to the four siblings.

There is no doubt that their mother's life had been shortened by chronic beryllium disease and she had deserved substantial compensation with a work related disease. In the 1980's the family would have been very angry if they knew of this disease but they did not. What amazed the family was that the U.S Government told them that she might have had the disease; the government were also the ones who informed them about the compensation program and studied her medical records to conclude that she had had beryllium disease.

Now the amazing thing to come from all of this is that GARDS has been the beneficiary of some of that compensation money in memory of their late mother. The asbestos sufferers of Gippsland thank you very much for your generosity.

The oxygen concentrator will have a plaque placed on it in memory of their mother.



## JAMES HARDIE UPDATE

The Carr Government in NSW has brought in emergency legislation to ensure thousands of James Hardie asbestos victims continue to receive compensation while it wrestles with the company over issues including immunity from civil prosecution for its directors. This move was sparked by the failure of the parties to reach final agreement on a proposed \$1.7 billion asbestos compensation package before state parliament resumed at the end of June, the government introduced legislation to save the MRCF from potential liquidation. The MRCF, which meets civil damages claims of Hardie asbestos victims, is running low on money, and its directors fear they could be charged with trading while technically insolvent. Legislation in parliament has put the MRCF under a NSW-supervised external administration regime. The Government had hoped to reach a final agreement with Hardie in time to pass legislation at the end of June. But it will only pass the holding legislation now, leaving other legislation, including any releases from civil liability, for when parliament resumes in September. The parties now hope to sign a principal agreement in late July or early August. But Hardie said the delay would mean it could not meet its earlier target of presenting a final deal to shareholders for approval at its annual general meeting in August, and it would now go to shareholders in late September or early October. Bob Carr said the slowness of finalising negotiations reflected "the many complex issues under Australian, Dutch and US law".

A key unresolved issue is James Hardie's insistence on immunities from civil prosecution by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission for its current and past directors, executive and employees in relation to the under funding of the MRCF



**Above are pictured the Alstom workers and management who are supporting our organisation  
Thank you so much**

## **ALWAYS REMEMBERED**



In the last week two of our very beloved GARDS members have succumb to asbestos related disease.  
Our hearts go out to their families whom we hold dear.

Hank DeVries who passed away on the 6<sup>th</sup> of July from mesothelioma was one of our members who helped us in our fight to win the Latrobe Regional Cancer Care Centre, which is now being built in Gippsland. He was an inspiration to all those who knew him and will always be remembered fondly for helping others in need. Our deepest sympathy to Pam, Ken and Julie. We would like to thank the De Vries family and all those who made donations to GARDS in memory of Hank.

Our other GARDS member Keith Fletcher who passed away on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July with asbestos related cancer will be sadly missed by all who knew him. Unfortunately Keith was unable to go to his favourite fishing spot this year up North due to his illness and do the thing he liked best. **CATCH FISH!**  
Our deepest sympathy to Shirley and her family.

This is the hardest/saddest thing about our group, that wonderful people like these two and their families we meet along the way have to suffer this terrible and very preventable tragedy. The loss of those friendships always impacts on us all. We have many fond memories of wonderful and very heroic people and their families who we support in any way we can.  
May Hank & Keith rest in peace!

## **TEAM EFFORT BY ALSTOM**

The workers at Alstom and management have been busy collecting funds for GARDS and have done a wonderful job. Through their tireless efforts for asbestos sufferers they have managed to raise \$2, 400 in the last couple of months which has now been put towards 2 conserving devices which fit to oxygen bottles and can extend the life of a bottle up to 3 times longer.

We want to thank all those workers and management members who have donated this money for these devices you are doing some great work at Hazelwood. The Alstom team will be continuing their efforts through out the year, so if you see any of these workers going about fund raising for us give them a big pat on the back because they are doing a mighty job in helping us to help asbestos sufferers and their families.

## **NEW OFFICE CHAIRS FROM FEDERAL GRANT**

The GARDS committee were very pleased to take delivery of new office chairs compliments of our Federal Grant application. These chairs will improve the Occupational Health and Safety of GARDS volunteers who man our office as they go about their work supporting asbestos sufferers. A BIG thanks to the Federal Government!" Pictured below is some of the GARDS committee & Russell Broadbent MP in the GARDS office trying out the new chairs.



## UP & COMING VISIT FROM PETER MacCALLUM CANCER CARE CENTRE

Hi my name is Andrew Holloway I am a senior researcher in the Centre for Cancer Genomics and Predictive Medicine at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre. I finished my PhD at the University of Melbourne in 1997, and since then I have been working on several cancers using molecular methods to identify genes, which affect the initiation or progression of cancers. In 2003, I began collaboration with Professor Bruce Robinson and Associate Professor Richard Lake at the University of Western Australia to work on mesothelioma. In 2004 we received a grant from the National Health and Medical Research Council to fund our work.

There are three main aims to our work: The first is to identify genes, which indicate the likely speed of progression of a person's mesothelioma. Increasingly, the management of cancer is being improved by the use of genetic information. The ability to accurately predict response to treatment with specific agents is essential in guiding the nature and aggressiveness of treatment, especially when new therapeutic agents are contemplated. Our second aim is to identify cell surface or secreted molecules specifically present in the blood of people with mesotheliomas as a means of developing an early diagnostic for the presence of disease. Early diagnosis of most cancers is usually associated with significantly improved patient survival. Small volume tumour bulk, as measured by CT scan, has been associated with longer survival and earlier stage in mesothelioma patients. Presently, asbestos-exposed individuals are often screened by annual pulmonary function tests and chest X-ray, neither of which are particularly effective at detecting early disease. We aim to identify markers, which are highly accurate, sensitive and specific to mesothelioma. The third aim is to develop a test to distinguish between adenocarcinoma of the lung and mesothelioma from samples of cells collected from pleural effusions. The differential diagnosis of mesothelioma and metastatic adenocarcinoma of lung to the pleura (LA) is problematic but important as patients with metastatic adenocarcinoma of the lung are treated using a different chemotherapy and/or surgery regime than mesothelioma patients. Distinguishing LA from mesothelioma is difficult, as the clinical features of these diseases overlap: both occur in older adults, who present with chest pain, pleural effusion, and respiratory distress. Cytological examination of pleural effusion to distinguish LA and mesothelioma is usually inconclusive and patients are usually then subjected to biopsy of tumour tissue for histopathology, with associated cost and risk of complications. **I'll be coming to speak to GARDS to go over the project with the group, and describe ways in which members of the community can get involved. All persons interested are most welcome to attend.**

*Andrew will be here conducting two meetings (afternoon 1.30pm & Night 7.30pm)*

*On the 25<sup>th</sup> of October at the GARDS centre. Try not to miss it!!!!*

### ***GUEST SPEAKERS APPEARING AT OUR AFTERNOON MEETINGS***

***Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> July – Dr Cecily Hunter – Research Fellow – Melbourne University***

Cecily will be talking about the research she has been doing around the history of asbestos in Latrobe Valley and some of the facts and pieces of information that people may not know from the 1940s – 1990s.

***Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> August - Jeanette Swann – Amazing Scents/Aromatherapy***

Jeanette will be talking about the different natural oils that are available and the benefit the oils can be for all sorts of situations and ailments

***27<sup>th</sup> September – Paul Dickison – Rural Ambulance Vic.***

Paul is the station officer at Moe Branch and is a qualified mobile intensive care ambulance (MICA) paramedic. He will be talking about what his job entails & some of the work the ambulance unit is called out to.



G.A.R.D.S. INC.  
WOULD LIKE TO THANK THESE  
SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS



Loy Yang B Power Station





[www.gards.org](http://www.gards.org)

Gippsland Asbestos Related  
Diseases Support Inc.

36 – 38 Darlimurla Ave  
Newborough, Vic. 3825

PO Box 111,  
Moe, Vic. 3825

**Phone: 51281218**  
**Fax: 51261897**

**Email: [info@gards.org](mailto:info@gards.org)**

**Web site: [www.gards.org](http://www.gards.org)**

### GARDS INC. SUPPORT

GARDS provides support and information to asbestos sufferers, their families and carers. This includes home visits by GARDS volunteers, a telephone advice service, and drop-in service at GARDS office.

GARDS INC. Support also conducts a monthly meeting (1.30pm – 3.30pm) on the last Tuesday of the month) where guest presenters are invited to provide information about support services of all kinds and any other topics of interest that the members might find of relevance. The meetings also provide a gathering place for experiences; GARDS Support is open to anyone whose lives have been affected by asbestos, their families and the general public.

### GARDS INC. EVENING MEETING

GARDS has an organisational, activities and advocating arm. Interested financial members and the general public can come along to evening meetings, which are, conducted 7.30pm – 9.30pm on the third Tuesday of the month.

These meetings provide a focal point for information sharing and problem identification. The aim of this group is to focus on improving health and support services and any other issues deemed relevant to improving overall outcomes to asbestos sufferers, their families and the general public. Thus ensuring asbestos-related issues are kept in the public eye and trying to rid our environment of asbestos products.

## ABOUT G.A.R.D.S. INC.

### Committee of Management

#### President:

Lyle Seear – Ph. 51671376

#### Vice President:

Trevor Callow – Ph. 51342208

#### Secretary:

Vicki Hamilton – Ph. 51278219  
**Mobile** 0407274173

#### Treasurer:

Pam Nicholson – Ph. 51275843  
**Mobile** 0408535671

#### Member:

Dorothy Roberts – 51274174  
**Mobile** 0407274174

Rodney LeLievre – 51261656  
**Mobile** 0403397800

### G.A.R.D.S. FEES

**Joining Fee** - \$5.00

#### **Annual Fees:**

Pensioners/Concession/  
Unemployed - \$3.00  
Employed persons - \$11.00

### MEETINGS:

**Support:** Last Tuesday of  
month, 1.30pm – 3.30pm

**Evening:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of month,  
7.30pm – 9.30pm

### OFFICE HOURS

**MONDAY:** 9.30am – 12 noon  
**TUESDAY:** 1.00pm – 3.00pm  
**WEDNESDAY:** 1.00pm – 3.30pm  
**THURSDAY:** 12 noon – 3.00pm  
**FRIDAY:** BY APPOINTMENT  
**CALL IN FOR A CHAT & CUPPA**

### UP AND COMING EVENTS

#### *Our Night/Day Meetings*

*26<sup>th</sup> July*

*Cecily Hunter*

*Melbourne University*

*30<sup>th</sup> August*

*Jeanette Swann*

*Amazing Scents*

*27<sup>th</sup> September*

*Paul Dickison*

*Rural Ambulance Vic.*

*25<sup>th</sup> October*

*1.30PM & 7.30PM*

*Night & Day meeting combined*

*Andrew Holloway Senior Research  
officer with Peter MacCallum Cancer  
Centre*

**30<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER ASBESTOS  
AWARENESS DAY**